

INDEX TO GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO COINAGE, ETC.

JUNE 18, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. CHARLES W. STONE, from the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany House Res. No. 314.]

The Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures, to whom was referred House resolution No. 314, respectfully submit the following report:

The purpose of this resolution is to make available for ready reference, and hence for practical use, whatever information there is in all the Government publications, documents, reports, laws, and Congressional debates on the subjects of coinage, finance, revenue, and bankruptcy. These are all topics of great present interest and importance. They have all been frequently and elaborately discussed in Congress, and have been the subjects of legislative report and action from the very commencement of the Government, and will continue to be subjects of Congressional consideration and legislative action in the future. It is exceedingly desirable that the legislator, as well as the people, shall have at hand, available for information, what has been said and done on these subjects in the past as a guide to intelligent action in the future.

At present, for lack of carefully prepared indexes, these Government publications are practically unavailable for general use. The search through the long list of public documents to ascertain what has been published and what discussion has been had in Congress or by Government officials in regard to any particular subject involves so much time and labor and often annoyance that very few serious efforts in this direction are likely to be made unless under imperative conditions. So as to individual papers or discussions relating to special subjects, one may be certain that they are somewhere to be found among our public documents, but, lacking an exhaustive index, he may be utterly unable to locate them except after protracted examination. The result is that the great mass of our public documents, especially those of earlier date, are of very little practical value and are very little consulted in

comparison with what would be the case were they made readily accessible and, so, serviceable, by a satisfactory index.

To remedy this defect with reference to the publications specified in the same, viz, those relating to coinage, finance, revenues, and bankruptcy, is the object of this resolution. These are closely related subjects, and may well be grouped together for index purposes. The careful and exhaustive examination of all the publications of the Government from 1789 to date required for an index to all these several series can be made with comparatively little additional labor and expense over and above what would be involved in the preparation of an index to any one of them, excepting bankruptcy, the documents relating to which are not very numerous.

It is proposed that the index contemplated by the resolution shall be thorough and exhaustive, covering all debates in Congress, all reports of Congressional committees and executive officers of the Government, all miscellaneous papers, and all laws relating to these four most important subjects, with reference by volume, number, and page, etc., to the exact place among the vast collection of Government publications where the particular document, discussion, law, etc., in question is found. And if, as is the case with many of these documents, they are published in two or more separate and distinct volumes and series, reference will be made to each and every volume and series, so that the index may possess the largest practical value.

It is proposed, also, to add several appendixes, the most important and useful of which will be a consolidated index to all the tariff acts from 1789, in which will be alphabetically noted every article enumerated in these acts, with citation of volume and page of the Statutes at Large where said article is mentioned. This will enable one readily to trace variations in the duty imposed upon any article from the foundation of the Government.

It is believed that an index prepared upon this plan will prove to be an exceedingly convenient and useful publication. The compensation fixed in the resolution is small in view either of the labor involved or of the value of the work.

The committee unanimously recommend the adoption of the resolution.